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The Turn of the Screw

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**Taylor University Theatre
presents**

HENRY JAMES' novel

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

IN CHAMBER THEATRE



**MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
May 6 8:15 P.M.**

HENRY JAMES'S LIFE AND WORKS

An acquaintance with the basic facts of Henry James's life can be useful in understanding how he developed his preoccupations with certain subject matter and locales, as well as his rather complicated technique. He was born in Washington Place, New York City, on April 15th, 1843 and died in England on February 28th, 1916. His father, Henry James, utilized inherited wealth to study and write in religion and philosophy. The family circle (four sons and a daughter) was a close though eccentric one, with much exchange of ideas. In later years, that very unity yielded a steady and important correspondence. Like his brother William, who became a noted psychologist and philosopher, Henry experimented with careers before settling into writing. He studied painting, attended Harvard Law School, and even dabbled in journalism.

Surely some of the most significant background for his writing career was provided by travels with his family and later on, by himself. He was taken to Europe as an infant, was there once again from the age of 12 to 15, and returned when 16 years old for an additional year. Between 1869 and 1875 (from age 26 on) he made three visits to Europe, studying the French theatre and associating with the literary circles of Paris and London. He formed important friendships with English and continental literary figures such as Turgenev, Flaubert, Zola, George Eliot, Tennyson and Browning. By 1876 he had settled in England, remaining here for the rest of his life. The first World War was shocking and painful for James; and in 1915, as a gesture of loyalty to his adopted country, he became a British subject. He never married, but enjoyed many close friendships, often maintaining lengthy correspondence to which he somehow managed to devote surprising energy in addition to his intensive writing of fiction and criticism.

Henry James's total creative output extends from the publication of his first novel, *Roderick Hudson*, in 1876 to his last works in the second decade of the 20th century, as well as posthumous publications. Among the better known early writings are *THE AMERICAN* (1877), which concerns an American named Christopher Newman, who having made his fortune at a youthful age, goes abroad to experience Europe and to acquire a wife if possible. *DAISY MILLER* (1879) falls into James's early period, too. She is an American girl in Rome, whose behavior is so naive that she does not survive. *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY* (1881) is probably his major work from his first creative years, and possibly his best known book. *ISABEL ARCHER* is an American girl with whom subsequent American girls have found it easy to identify; her qualities are those of the typical Jamesian hero or heroine: imagination, spirit, intense self-analysis, a fierce honesty and sense of conscience, as well as considerable innocence.

The years to about 1900 are regarded as James's middle period, a time during which he wrote more novels and a growing number of short stories, including the well known "mystery," *THE TURN OF THE SCREW*, which is in fact a novella or longer short story. For a period of five years during this phase of his career, he experimented unsuccessfully with drama. The failure of his plays was a disappointment to James, but at the same time a proof that his talent of producing "pictorial/dramatic" situations was more that of a novelist (and a painter) than that of a dramatist.

There are three major works of what is sometimes called his major period, of which *THE AMBASSADORS* is one. In fact, *THE WINGS OF THE DOVE* (1902), *THE AMBASSADORS* (1903) and *THE GOLDEN BOWL* (1904) are regarded by some as a trilogy with links in style and content. What sets them apart from earlier works is the highly developed techniques of "center of consciousness," involved, circuitous style (complicated sentences, elaborate imagery, experiments with symbolism). By this time, James had become known as a very "intellectual" author; correspondingly his popularity declined. In his late years, consequently, he felt he had "fallen into evil days," as he put it; for he was beset with doubts as to the rightness and worth of what he was currently creating. James continued to write as he believed he could, and should, which represents a kind of literary act of faith which has been demanded of many artists. The resurgence of popularity and esteem for his writings since the 1940's has perhaps justified his faith in himself. Today there are probably many readers who find James esoteric, precious, tedious or just plain dull (some of whom understand him properly, some of whom do not). There are other readers who find his work exciting, a monument to the human imaginative powers and a labor in behalf of the English language. There are surely very few serious students of literature, however, who would not admit his greatness and try to acquaint themselves with the nature of that greatness.

The Speech and Drama Department
and Trojan Players
present

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

by Henry James

Allen Goetcheus, Director
Harvey Campbell, Set and Lighting Design
Jessie Rousselow, Costume Design

CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Governess Debi Camefix
Miles Don Rice*
Young children in her charge
Flora Debbie Waske
Mrs. Grose, *the housekeeper* Marilyn Jones*
Quint, *a former manservant* Don McLaughlin*
Miss Jessel, *a former governess* Sue Van Poucher

The action takes place in and around Bly, an English country-house, at the end of the last century.

Act I Chapters 1 - 7
*intermission***
Act II Chapters 8 - 16
*intermission***
Act III Chapters 18-24***

* * * * *

* Denotes TROJAN PLAYER membership
** Intermissions will be five minutes
*** Chapter 17 is omitted from the program

We wish to thank Mr. Gerald Hodson and his staff at the Educational Media Center for their help in the preparation of the slides used in tonight's production.

As a courtesy to the actors, please do not use cameras during the program.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director Harvey Campbell
Costumier Jessie Rousselow
Assistant to the Director Linda Kukuk*

Set Committee	Jack Marsh Rick McKee Joe Rupp Nancy Spaulding Dana Taylor
Sound	Gregg Fuller* Portia Johnson*
Slides	Kathy Jenkinson* Jim Oosting* Carolyn Savage*
Lights	Jack Marsh Rick McKee Nancy Spaulding
Make-up	PORTIA JOHNSON* Judy DeFraitese*
Costumes	Kathy Jenkinson* Linda Sulfridge*
House	DEBI KING Nancy Jane Mary Ellen Leadingham Alison Muesing Cindy Rife Jeanne Scherling
Publicity	Jeanne Bullock Mary Nacey

* Denotes Trojan Player Member

“CHAMBER THEATRE is a hybrid form. It is a method of staging prose fiction, retaining the text of the story or novel being performed but locating the scenes of the story onstage. It is not a dramatization, not a stage adaptation of prose fiction. It keeps the narrative form, the narrator, the past tense in which most fiction is written, but it is like OUR TOWN in moving with narrator, between the audience and the scenes onstage. Thus it gives fiction some of the immediacy of drama without sacrificing the epic mode in which it has been written.

A further refinement in CHAMBER THEATRE as practiced by the scholar who has most fully served to define and develop it, Professor Robert S. Breen, of the Department of Interpretation at Northwestern University, is that it treats as direct discourse certain parts of the text which are written as indirect discourse, assigning such passages to characters as if they were spoken aloud.

"As written, stories and novels constantly move between scenes . . . and nonscenes, where the author or narrator summarizes or describes or explains or reflects, talking as it were, directly to us, the silent readers. CHAMBER THEATRE thus simply takes advantage of the dramatic moments to put them . . . on the stage. In doing this, it tends more fully than READER'S THEATRE to make use of the conventions of stage performance: costumes, settings, character makeup. But it still strives to keep these elements to a minimum, and not to identify itself with the fully staged play, just as OUR TOWN does. It is amazing what can be done with a chair, a table, and a spotlight."

THE ART OF INTERPRETATION
--Wallace A. Bacon